

pressed forward, to emerge at length, bleeding and torn, at the head of the little bay. It was late afternoon; a cottage stood on the bank not fifty yards distant; and the boat just showed among the mangroves. Brewster crept cautiously toward it. He pulled it from its place into the shallow water.

Then he discovered that, with the chain and ball, he could not enter it. He could not lift his leg from the swampy bottom of the bay; nor, had he done so, could he have climbed in without upsetting the craft.

Under the seat, as he had been advised, he saw the little oilskin package containing the money and the key. But he could not reach so far. His finger tips stopped short a full foot; to stretch further meant to upset the little craft. He struggled till the sweat poured down his face, then, turning, he became aware that a small child was watching him, a girl about five years old, evidently from the cottage.

"Come here," said Brewster hoarsely, and the child obeyed. "Do you see that package under that seat? Could you get it for me?"

The child stood watching him, finger in mouth, half frightened, half interested. It was evident she had no intention of doing what the strange man told her. Brewster resolved to try the effect of fear.

"Majorie! Majorie!" called a clear voice from the cottage.

"Come here!" cried Brewster

in a hoarse, angry whisper, climb in there at once and get me that package!"

Terrified, the child began to cry. Brewster lost control of himself and she set up a scream. Then the mangroves parted and a clear-eyed, indignant young woman, perhaps Brewster's own age, confronted him.

"What are you doing with Majorie?" she cried. "Do you think we are afraid of tramps here? Off with you, or I'll set the dogs on you." Then her eyes fell on the ball and chain and she recoiled a step, but still stood facing him, one hand holding Marjorie tightly to her.

"A convict," she said, and only half veiled her terror.

"Yes," said the man. "I'll make a clean breast of it. I'm Brewster—Richard Brewster. I see you know who I am. There is a package under that seat with a key that will unlock this padlock, and five hundred dollars. I can't reach it with this attachment. Get it for me and I'll divide the money with you."

"We don't help convicts here," answered the girl, watching him steadily. She half turned, still clutching the child.

"I'll give you all," shouted Brewster. "Five hundred. Good Lord! I could buy your crazy cottage for that—and you too."

She turned on him. "I guess that's where you're wrong," she answered bitterly. "Some folks can't be bought. If they could my folks would be richer than they are. Perhaps you know my